

Whack-a-Mole with the terrorists, we could do that. We could just rely on the 1978 FISA and pretend that we never had e-mail, that we never had cell phones, that we didn't have voice video and data just traveling on the waves through the air.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that would be nice and make us feel good and comfortable, but the point is, it is not true. It just isn't true. And as the gentleman from Georgia has so eloquently said, we know, we know that the terrorists are using these new technologies to communicate, and we know that there are terrorists in foreign countries who are communicating with other terrorists in foreign countries who are trying to do harm to our troops in the field. We have evidence of that, Mr. Speaker. To our citizens in this country, we have evidence of that and to our citizens and our allies around the globe.

Well, what is so difficult to understand about this, Mr. Speaker? It just seems like when the evidence is there, as the facts are there, as my colleague from Georgia says, why can there not be an admission that those are the facts, they are the givens, everybody, everybody in D.C. seems to agree with this except the leadership of this body. And I find it very disconcerting.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my good friend for her comments and for her perspective and for bringing more light and truth to this issue. And it is not just our opinion. It's the opinion of so many individuals.

As you mentioned, the bipartisan bill in the United States Senate, 68-29. These aren't the most harmonious of times in Washington, Mr. Speaker; but the gentlelady from Tennessee and I certainly understand and appreciate that one of our primary responsibilities is the protection of our Nation. And the Senate understood that, and that's why they worked together in a bipartisan way.

So many individuals have given their opinion about why this was important. Mike McConnell, who is the Director of National Intelligence, said before the House Intelligence Committee, We are significantly burdened in capturing overseas communications of foreign terrorists planning to conduct attacks inside the United States. That's what the Director of National Intelligence said.

And Senator JAY ROCKEFELLER, a Democrat from West Virginia who is the chairman of the Intelligence Committee in the Senate, said just last month, What people have to understand around here is that the quality of the intelligence we are going to be receiving is going to be degraded. He said that, if we allow the Protect America Act to expire. Well, Mr. Speaker, we didn't allow it to expire, but the leadership in the House has allowed it to expire. And that's what concerns us so greatly.

I know that my friend from Tennessee appreciates what Senator ROCKEFELLER has said as it relates to

this issue, and I am pleased to yield back.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, there was a comment, you mentioned, Mike McConnell, who is the Director of National Intelligence, and I would go to a quote that he gave before to the Senate panel, and listen to this: that half, half, not a third, not a quarter, not a tenth, that half, 50 percent, of what we know comes from electronic surveillance. That means that all of these new forms of communication that are out there, this is what the terrorist cells are using. Half of what we know comes from electronic surveillance, and get this, and the outdated Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act had degraded those intercepts by two-thirds.

I just find it so egregious that we would hamstring and make it difficult for the intelligence community to carry out their jobs when they are seeking to serve this Nation, when they are seeking to work with the military and to make certain that we know who is seeking to do us harm.

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend once again for her comments and perspective on this most important issue.

I don't know, Mr. Speaker, if there's anything that we do here that is more important than making certain that America is safe and secure. And the American people, although they know that there are partisan battles and political games that are played here, they understand and appreciate that. But what they don't understand is a leadership that abrogates the duty and responsibility that they have to make certain that this Nation is safe.

Person after person, individuals who have great knowledge and experience in this area, much greater than those of us in the House of Representatives in terms of actual hands-on experience in determining what the terrorists are trying to do to do us harm, to a person, to a person say that this is a bill that must be passed.

We are now 19 or 20 days into not having the ability to gain this intelligence, and it is harming our Nation. It is putting us at greater risk.

We've been joined by another good friend from Georgia (Mr. WESTMORELAND), and I look forward to your comments on the issue of the importance and imperative of passing the Protect America Act, and I will yield to him.

Mr. WESTMORELAND. Mr. Speaker, I was listening to Mr. PRICE and Mrs. BLACKBURN talk, and I was wondering if we had the time to do this. So I went back to the day that the FISA failed, which was February 13, and I looked at it and said this is a complicated bill and there are some issues and things to be worked out and have we had enough time to do it and how much time are we spending on discussing this FISA.

And so after listening to you all, I went back and got the schedule for February, and after February 13, on February 14, we did eight suspension

bills, which are bills that have very little discussion, and two motions to adjourn. So we were in session that day about 5 hours, but nothing about FISA.

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And then it seems, too, that we were gone for about 8 days. And then, Congresswoman, when we got back the week of the 25th, we worked 4 days for a total of 15 hours and 5 minutes with no FISA legislation. We did three suspensions on the 25th. We did the public housing on the 26th, which was withdrawn. We did the energy tax on the 27th. And then we did three suspensions on the 28th. And so, that was for February.

And if you look at what we've done in March, we did three suspensions yesterday. We did six suspensions the next day. Then we did the mental health, which was a total of about 10 hours that we spent on that. And then today, it's 4 o'clock and we're already out and didn't do anything today.

So, I guess my question, then, is, what are we doing? I mean, we, the 109th Congress, was called the "do-nothing" Congress. What can this Congress be called? Does anybody have a good name, Congresswoman, that we can call this Congress?

Mr. PRICE of Georgia. Reclaiming my time, I appreciate that. Mr. Speaker, it's kind of appropriate that we are interrupted by a unanimous consent request, a motion that says we ought not do anything in this House until next week, let's just go home.

My friend from Georgia points out that we haven't been doing a lot this year, haven't been doing a whole lot this 110th Congress. And the American people can tolerate a lot in their political leaders, but what they can't tolerate is inaction on important issues and matters of national concern, national security. So, it frustrates them, it frustrates us that this leadership won't bring this bill to the floor. Twenty-one Members of the majority party have signed a letter that said they would vote for this; 21 Members. This bill would pass if it were just brought to the floor.

I am pleased to yield to my good friend from Tennessee.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

The gentleman from Georgia is so right in what he is pointing out. What we're spending our time doing here are items that are not crucial, they're policy debates. They're policy debates about how you want to approach an issue. My goodness, the Government Reform Committee and my committee, Energy and Commerce, we have had hearings on steroids in pro sports. Now, we had plenty of time to parade people in and do these hearings, but we didn't have the time for FISA. We've had plenty of time to have committee hearings. Today, we were in Committee on Energy and Commerce on tobacco, and if we wanted the FDA, who already cannot keep the Nation's food supply